

UNIVERSAL  
LIBRARY

OU\_150286

UNIVERSAL  
LIBRARY



OSMANIA UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

Call No. 301/J62 Accession No. 15573

Author Joad, L. E. M.

Title Diogenes or the future of leisure  
This book should be returned on or before the date  
last marked below. 1929.



**DIOGENES**  
**OR**  
**THE FUTURE OF LEISURE**

## TO-DAY AND TO-MORROW

*For the Contents of this Series see end  
of the Book.*

# DIOGENES OR THE FUTURE OF LEISURE

By  
C. E. M. JOAD  
Author of *Thrasymachus*,  
*The Babbit Warren*,  
*After-Dinner Philosophy*, etc.

LONDON  
KEGAN PAUL, TRENCH, TRUBNER & Co., LTD.  
NEW YORK: E. P. DUTTON & Co.

*First published October, 1928*  
*Reprinted July, 1929*

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN BY  
STEPHEN AUSTIN AND SONS., LTD., HERTFORD.



## CONTENTS

	PAGE
I. THE ART OF LIVING . .	7
II. THE MISUSES OF LEISURE .	21
III. THE FUTURE OF LEISURE .	72



# THE FUTURE OF LEISURE

## I

### THE ART OF LIVING

CIVILIZED man spends rather more than two-thirds of his waking life in obtaining the means to make life possible; he has only one third left for living. As a consequence he is a shocking bungler in the art of life through sheer lack of practice. He does not realize this, assuming that the knowledge of how to live rightly is instinctive. This belief is a delusion. Savages may enjoy life instinctively, but not civilized man, for the reason that his life is not instinctive but artificial. To enjoy it he must cultivate artificial tastes, and artificial tastes are acquired tastes. This is not to disparage acquired tastes; far from it. All good tastes are acquired; children, for example, prefer jam to marmalade and sweets to savouries; our first pipe makes us sick, and the adolescent taste in music is execrable. This last example may serve as the occasion for a little personal reminiscence, always desirable at the beginning of a book as serving to introduce the author to the reader.

## THE FUTURE OF LEISURE

At the age of eight, being by nature and inheritance of a musical disposition, I derived great pleasure from the barrel organ. At seventeen almost all kinds of music delighted me ; I sang songs both comic and sentimental with gusto, and assiduously attended the then popular musical comedies. At twenty-two I was enslaved to Gilbert and Sullivan, and began to tire of contemporary ballads. At about this time, being at Oxford and of a disputatious turn of mind, I was maintaining, with I know not whether more of vehemence or of ignorance, that classical music was rubbish—I remember expatiating on its lamentable lack of tunes—and that the apparent addiction to it of would-be musical people could only be explained as pose. Then I heard Chopin's Raindrop Prelude, and the Pathétique Sonata of Beethoven. I dissolved in wistfulness over the first and waxed nobly tragic over the second, and for eight years Chopin and Beethoven, especially Beethoven, were my gods. On about the fiftieth repetition the early sonatas and symphonies of Beethoven grew stale, but I continued to enthuse over his last period. About this time I was introduced to Bach. Unmoved at first, it was only after many hearings that I began to respond. Gradually the appeal of Bach's music grew ; from

## THE ART OF LIVING

attracting it began to dominate, and from dominating to monopolize me, until now I desire to hear no other, and I hope that with occasional Mozartian and Purcellian interludes, I shall remain with Bach for the rest of my days. The price I pay for my raptures is to find most music crude, vulgar, or ugly, and in consequence I derive far less quantitative pleasure from music than in my barrel organ days; but the quality of the pleasure I now obtain from Bach is unmatched by any other experience life holds for me; or so I like to think.

From this example I conclude that good tastes must be acquired, nay more, that they must be worked for; they must be pursued with effort and through boredom, and their formation is conditioned by a process of growing tired of what is bad. Also, though this is a separate point which we cannot pursue, they are the first to fall away from us. Even when they are formed we have to apply ourselves assiduously to their cultivation. When we grow old or ill, when our senses decay, or we find ourselves marooned on desert islands, it is our acquired and not our instinctive tastes that are the first to go. Good taste, then, is hard to come by and easy to lose.

In the sphere of literature and the arts generalizations of this type are readily

## THE FUTURE OF LEISURE

admitted. Nobody expects a savage to go into ecstasies over a Bach fugue, or an agricultural labourer to appreciate Meredith, while we regretfully agree that our children's tastes in literature are not our own. Now the acquirement of good taste in literature and music takes time ; it also, as I have said, involves effort and energy. Yet lacking it, we recognize that we shall miss the best that they have to offer. These things are agreed. But their application to the art of life, of all the arts the most difficult, as it is the most important, is overlooked. In the art of life we are woefully short of practice ; we cultivate it with tired brains and jaded energies ; we bring to it the fag ends of days devoted to making money or to achieving fame. In particular we assume that any fool with money in his pockets and a fortnight at the seaside will know how to enjoy himself. And then we are surprised that things go wrong, that we fail.

*Reader.* We don't fail. I enjoyed my last holiday on Dartmoor tremendously. And look at that young fool at the seaside with his girl ! Are you going to suggest that he is not happy ?

*Author.* The young fool is in love and he enjoys the happiness appropriate to his condition, which is a temporary phenomenon arising from physiological

## THE ART OF LIVING

causes over which he has no control. The process known as being in love has no relation to the art of life ; it is merely life's contrivance for ensuring its own continuance. As such it will not persist, though it may recur. Consider the young fool ten years later, wrangling with wife and pestered with children on the beach at Margate, and you will be forced to agree with Shaw that the best definition of hell is a perpetual holiday. As for yourself you confuse the pleasures attendant upon release from a burdensome routine, the substitution of country sights and sounds for bricks and mortar, and the control and management of your car (I am sure you went in a car) with ability in the art of life. Suppose the tour had prolonged itself from a fortnight to a couple of months ; how would you have fared then ?

*Reader.* Still I insist that we don't fail.

*Author.* Kindly have patience until you have finished the book.

Our lack of practice in the art of life leads to a mistaken conception of leisure which finds expression in the direct pursuit of pleasure and beauty, and in a false notion of entertainment as something for which one pays.

It is difficult to make righteousness readable, and I propose, therefore, to

## THE FUTURE OF LEISURE

say as little as may be about the principles of right living. But the didactic part of this book has got to come sooner or later, and it may as well come now. I hope, however, to get it over in half a dozen pages.

The knowledge that pleasure may not be pursued directly forms part of the instinctive wisdom of the ages, which the modern world has somehow missed. The kingdom of happiness, like the kingdom of beauty, is not to be taken by storm, any more than it is to be purchased with dollars. Pursue happiness directly and you will find that she eludes you ; but she will sometimes consent to surprise you, when you are busy with something else. There is no adequate explanation of this fact. You may say, following Schopenhauer, that life is a restless ever-changing urge, expressing itself in a continual series of needs and wants. Wanting is a pain and provokes the individual to take steps to satisfy the want. Satisfaction brings pleasure but only for a moment, since the old want is immediately succeeded by a new one. Now, since satisfaction consists merely in deliverance from the pain of need, and since, when it is satisfied, the need ceases, it is clear that the pleasure of satisfaction can only be momentary. Pleasure, in other words, is relative to and



## THE ART OF LIVING

dependent upon a preceding need, and does not outlive the need whose satisfaction it attends. Hence those who seek to live a life of pleasure make a double mistake; they endeavour to obtain pleasure without undergoing the pain of the preceding need, and they endeavour to prolong pleasure, whose nature is fleeting, with a view to its continued enjoyment. But in proportion as pleasures increase the capacity for them diminishes, since what is customary is no longer felt as a pleasure. The penalty we pay for these mistakes is boredom and satiety. This, at least, is the gospel according to Schopenhauer.

Or, if you like a more picturesque explanation, you may say that the elusiveness of pleasure is one of the penalties of the Fall, and that, since man left Eden, it has been decreed that only by roundabout means and by looking the other way shall he gain what most he desires; or, more picturesquely still, that God is a practical joker, who created the world for the amusement derived from contemplating its anomalies. The Tantalus joke is a good one, and the spectacle of happiness being withdrawn from the clutching hands of those who seek to grasp it does not pall even when the play lasts through eternity. The irony is increased by the behaviour of

## THE FUTURE OF LEISURE

the tantalized who, buoyed up by the hope eternally frustrated that the future will be better than the past, praise the author of their miseries and are grateful that things are no worse.

But whatever the explanation of the coyness of pleasure, the fact is undeniable. It has been discovered and rediscovered by successive ages, until it has come to form one of the secular commonplaces of worldly wisdom. Yet the business man, who sets increasingly the standards of the modern world, is apparently unaware of it. The habits of this strange phenomenon may be studied with the greatest advantage in America. America, it will be generally agreed, is the most typical country of the modern world. She increasingly imposes her standards upon Europe, and will presently succeed in turning England into a glorified park, studded with thatched cottages and preserved rustics and ringed with hotels, for the delectation of her retired or travelling rich. The best that we can hope is that she will eat us altogether, thereby enabling us to communicate to her what little good remains in us. In any event, as Anatole France observed, the future is an American future. This being our fate, it is right that we should take our examples of modern life and manners from America, which brings

## THE ART OF LIVING

me back to the habits of the business man.

Now the business man's conception of the good life is bound up with the spending of money. Having acquired things all his life by the simple expedient of paying for them, he believes that happiness may be obtained by the same methods. And so, having made his pile and retired to enjoy it, his first step is to spend vast sums on himself and his female appendages. There is a street in New York where men are reckoned poor on £10,000 a year. There are 4,000 families in this street, who are estimated to disburse between them about £56,000,000 a year. Of this amount £2,500 a day is spent on flowers, £40,000 a day on women's clothes (excluding furs), £3,250,000 a year on millinery, £800,000 a year on beauty shops, £1,000,000 on theatres and entertainments, £3,000,000 on wines and spirits, and £3,000,000 on travel.

When the satisfaction derived from the brute expenditure of wealth begins to pall, the American rich take to the practice of religion or of immorality. The former is on the whole preferred by the old, the latter by the young. Driven by the spur of boredom, leisured ladies of middle age fall victims to every quack who proffers them a new cult whether of the deity or the unconscious. Greedily

## THE FUTURE OF LEISURE

they savour the luxuries of personal revelation in the modern substitute for the confessional, the psycho-analyst's consulting room, and vainly hoping to invest their lives with significance and to find a solace for their sick souls, take indiscriminately to politics, religion, drink, drugs, or culture. The young of both sexes preach the doctrine of freedom, by which they mean freedom from sexual restraints. A lady, Miss Temple, has recently been discussing the perennial subject of the modern girl in the American paper, *The Forum*. After commenting upon the number of pregnancies among College graduates, and citing the attitude of a well-known New York neurologist who "instead of being alarmed by such conditions, dismissed the matter with the cheerful and reassuring statement that after all it was only human nature, and things had never been different", she proceeds as follows: "It is almost impossible to get away from the subject of sex to-day. It is talked over in polite and impolite salons; it is discussed in Park Avenue hotels and in Child's. There are books about it. There are plays about it. There is even a science about it. Ordinarily one might say that the life of the present generation is the result of constant suggestion and rumour. But not so in this instance. It is the

## THE ART OF LIVING

young people themselves who are the students and advocates of the 'new morality'. Largely through us, old standards are now being laughed at and called blind; conventions have been dispensed with; obligations are scoffed at, and 'liberate the Libido' has become our national motto."

That this method of finding happiness does not prove altogether satisfactory should not occasion surprise. Mankind in the mass has not yet evolved at a stage at which it is capable of thinking and acting on its own responsibility without running into disaster. It still needs to get its suits of morals and beliefs ready made from the social shop, since it is too lazy and too stupid to make them for itself; it still demands in fact that it shall be told what to do and what to believe. The old on the whole have discovered this, and sooner or later settle down into the beliefs that fit them. The young like to experiment, and in the name of freedom insist on doing what they please. The experiments, however, are not as successful as could be wished. "Suicide epidemic among American University students," says the morning paper, and proceeds to tell us that suicides among students had at the time of writing been at the rate of one a week for the past eight weeks. None

## THE FUTURE OF LEISURE

of the deaths recorded were due to external causes, but to what is ambiguously described as "mental trouble". "Mental trouble" resolves itself in one case into a frustrated love affair, in another into drug taking, into a clash of beliefs in a third, and into being bored in a fourth. "Coarse plays such as those raided in New York and unrestrained newspapers are," we are told, "blamed for the degeneration of 'flaming youth' . . . . Teachers are alarmed at the drinking in mixed high schools and at rowdy school dances." "The student XY" put his head in a gas stove "because he was 'tired of the girls' and 'didn't know what to do with himself'." And so on and so forth. Meanwhile every temperamental miss with a light-boiled "ego" swimming about in a saucepan of emotion serves it up in the zeal for self-expression and the form of a novel for the public to swallow. So much for the young.

The old men, no longer able to give bad example to the younger, give them good advice instead. But they know no more than their juniors how to spend their time. To escape the boredom of leisure they take up some particularly dangerous and hazardous pursuit, such as rock climbing or exploring the Amazon jungle—as I write I have a picture before me of a

## THE ART OF LIVING

number of rich American business men entertaining to dinner an unchained lion—in which they can only persuade others to accompany them by offering them enormous salaries, until finally they return to their offices and proceed to acquire money they do not want, in despair of making life tolerable without the hard labour to which they have been accustomed.

Imitation religions, immorality on principle, and danger for pleasure, these are characteristics of the age, chosen at random from among many symptoms of the same disease. This is the disease of boredom which springs from the direct pursuit of happiness. Amused we must be at all costs, yet we have no art in amusing ourselves. Thus our notion of entertainment or amusement as something for which one pays resolves itself into the confession that we must pay other people to do for us what we can no longer do for ourselves. And since, like all bought pleasures, bought entertainment rapidly palls, leaders of society range the world in vain and restless pursuit of the satisfaction which comes to tramps and artists unsought.

The truth of the matter is that work is the only occupation yet invented which mankind has been able to endure in any but the smallest possible doses. Of all

## THE FUTURE OF LEISURE

forms of bondage servitude to work is the least, as servitude to pleasure is the most exacting. Throw yourself body and soul into your work, lose yourself in an interest, devote yourself to a cause, lift yourself out of the selfish little pit of vanity and desire which is the self by giving yourself to something greater than the self, and on looking back you will find that you have been happy. Pursue happiness directly, and it will elude you ; purchase it, and it will turn to dust and ashes at your dollars' touch.

We must work, then, for work's sake, and take happiness for the wild flower that it is. To stabilize the rainbow, to bottle the perfume, to grasp in order to possess, this is the prime error of the age, an error which vitiates our lives and ruins our leisure. Happiness is not a house that can be built with hands ; it is a flower that surprises you, a song which you hear as you pass the hedge, rising suddenly and simply in the night, and dying down again. These are our general principles ; we will now proceed to their application.



## II

### THE MISUSES OF LEISURE

*Holidays.*—There is a small place, which I will call X, on the coast of Dorset which I used to visit rather frequently. The downs there come close to the sea and the village lies at their foot. A road running down from the hills behind forms its main street, and in places is very steep, so that the doorsteps jostle against the eaves of the houses below. The houses by the way are mostly thatched and built of that warm coloured stone that you find in Cotswold villages, which glows with a subdued radiance, as if it were lit up within, so mellow is it. I am no poet to describe the beauty and the peace of this place; indeed they are indescribable. Let me, then, be prosy and say that that peculiar quality, or set of qualities which attaches, or used to attach to the English countryside, a quality which many have tried but few have succeeded in describing, which has made the English country village more talked of and more beloved by its inhabitants than that of any other land, was here to be found in a pre-eminent

## THE FUTURE OF LEISURE

degree. Hudson knew the place and wrote of it.

On a summer afternoon two years ago I walked along the Dorset hills intending to spend the night at X. It was a warm, still day and, as I climbed the last slope from the top of which there was a view of the village, I heard a confused murmuring noise like the buzzing of innumerable bees. I gained the summit and looked down. At first I thought that X had been visited by an earthquake, so thronged and confused was the aspect it presented, so like an anthheap into which someone has rudely poked a stick. Presently, however, I saw that this was no earthquake but a descent of holiday-makers. At the top of the main street there was drawn up a row of chars-a-banc; some of them had discharged their contents, others were still vainly trying to do so. Those disgorged by the foremost vehicles were pressing in a great mass down the main street of X, while separate trickles overflowed down the alleys and paths which branched off on either side. Their objective, it was clear, was the beach, where concert parties, shooting galleries, cocoanut shies, merry-go-rounds, and other delights could be obscurely discerned. This they had not yet succeeded in reaching and success seemed unlikely, at any rate, in the

## THE MISUSES OF LEISURE

immediate future. For midway up the village street they were met and breasted by another great mass of persons, whose base was upon the shore itself. These were being discharged in great numbers from a steamer, which lay beside the jetty and was pouring its passengers in an unending stream upon the offended beach. Two more steamers were lying to about fifty yards out, and were waiting the opportunity to swell the numbers of the invading hordes.

At the moment the two armies of holiday makers, that descending from the chairs-a-banc and that ascending from the beach, were joined in mortal combat in the centre of the village. This way and that the struggle swayed, growing every moment fiercer as the press of those in front was increased by the continually swelling numbers behind. And the air was rent with a horrible din as those above cried "to the beach" and those below "to the village", while the passion of the combatants, already keen, was inflamed a hundredfold by the sight of picture postcards hanging enticingly outside stationers' shops, and the sticks of welcoming pink rock purveyed by the new rich of X, which blushed demurely behind plate glass windows.

And men cursed and sweated, and women shrieked and at convenient

## THE FUTURE OF LEISURE

moments fainted, and a hot stench assailed my nostrils as I gazed spell-bound from the hill above, until a cloud of dust rising like a pall over the affronted village obscured the combatants from my view, and I went away not knowing the issue of the day.

Materialist science has made us familiar with the view that life is an offshoot or emanation from matter. Once our planet was too hot and too moist to maintain life, just as one day it will become too cold and too dry. In that remote past there was no life, since matter had not yet reached the stage of development necessary for its generation. Life, then, is a product of material forces, a phenomenon which has supervened on the earth's surface under suitable conditions. Moralizing this view we may think of our earth in its early days as a molten ball of red hot matter, aglow with the generous flames of youth. In course of time its central fires began to cool and a crust formed upon its surface. As it grew older yet this crust decayed, and out of the evil humours of its corruption bred life, much as a rotting cheese will breed maggots. Life, then, is a disease in the constitution of the earth, a product of rotting matter, preying like a fungoid growth upon the planet upon whose surface it crawls. This view is

## THE MISUSES OF LEISURE

an unpleasant one, and I do not hold it. But if you do not wish to be persuaded against your will to think of your fellow creatures as the crawling maggots of the earth's decay, refrain from visiting a seaside resort in holiday time.

The holiday-makers festering on the beach at Margate at 11 o'clock on the morning of 12th August, 1931, if placed end to end, would stretch from London to the north pole, and for all I know, down the other side of the earth and over the equator to the south pole, where let them perish miserably.

*The Country.*—We all of us love the country; of course we do. To love the country is a sign of virtue, and a source of pride, like early rising or answering letters by return of post. Heroes of novels (good novels, not modern ones) are infallibly recognized from the information that little children instinctively trust them, and that they are only really happy among the innocent pursuits of their native farmstead. Yes, we all love the country, and in confessing it we pay an indirect compliment to ourselves. But most of us love it best in books.

In real life it is damp, muddy, and liable to give us rheumatism, intolerably dull in winter and most disliked by those whose love is the most vocal. For we

## THE FUTURE OF LEISURE

have drifted away from Nature, and, in spite of our resolution to love her, are unable to take her naturally as she is, with the result that we enjoy her for the most part only in Hudson and imagination. As Hudson himself says, "We are not in nature; we are out of her, having made our own conditions; and our conditions have reacted upon us, and made us what we are—artificial creatures. Nature is now something pretty to go and look at occasionally, but not too often, nor for too long a time."

Hence the Nemesis that overtakes the efforts of those who embarking upon the simple life seek to become natural by dint of living with Nature. Endeavouring to impose an artificial primitiveness upon a primitive artificiality, they feed inadequately on vegetables, wear homespun clothes and catch colds; presently they subside into a garden suburb with all the windows open and trouble over the drains.

But those who practice the simple life are not alone in thinking that nature will yield her secrets to casual solicitation. Obsessed by the dominating belief of the age that beauty, like pleasure, can be taken by storm, we descend upon the country in ever increasing numbers; we bind it with fences, spawn over it in villas and rape it in cars; we then

## THE MISUSES OF LEISURE

proceed to enjoy it. But what we are enjoying is no longer the country.

Look, for instance, at Surrey. There are still parts of the North Downs whose pines and heather are not begrimed with the obscene progeny of motor cars, nor blasted with the clamour of insistent hog horns, nor littered with paper bags and bottles which the Londoner deposits for the "Urban District Council" to remove. But they are few and grow fewer. For the rest Surrey is a bought-up land, parcelled out and prostituted for the purposes of the powerful, and, even where its life is still in part its own, red brick villas take their place side by side with tumbling cottages round village greens, and woods and heather slopes are tamed, dissected and imprisoned by barbed wire set up by the men of tin and brass. It is impossible to walk for more than a couple of miles in any direction without trespassing upon somebody's property. This unlimited opportunity for trespass upon the estates of stockbrokers is indeed our one poor compensation for what we have lost. The poor are not the village poor, living a life of their own, brewing good cider and content with themselves. They are leeches and parasites upon the tourists, servile fawners upon the imported stockbrokers, despisers of all who do not ride in cars ; and upon

## THE FUTURE OF LEISURE

the proceeds of their degradation they buy gramophones and wireless sets and grow basely rich.

Just beyond lies Sussex, still for the most part open and unconquered save for a salient captured here and there and the ganglions of vulgarity round the coast. But the days of Sussex are fast drawing to their close. The eyes of her nymphs are sad and they keep their faces averted from the doom advancing from the north. Soon the red rash will creep down from the Surrey hills into the Weald, and England will surrender one more province to the advancing armies of Suburbia. And as it is to-day with Sussex, so will it soon be with Hants and Dorset and the whole of England south of the Thames.

Thus the country changes at our approach and transforms itself into suburb. We come to nature in increasing numbers for solace and refreshment, and, as we advance, nature withdraws herself increasingly from us. Partly, of course, we cannot help ourselves. It is our destiny never to love anything without seeking to alter it, and in altering it to make it other than what we have loved. We cannot love a woman without improving her; we cannot love a tree or a stone even, for sooner or later we shall be pruning the tree or chipping



## THE MISUSES OF LEISURE

a bit off the stone ; we cannot love a wood but we must fence it in to show that it is ours. This desire to meddle to alter and improve springs from the imperious life within us, a life which, evolving in and through us its instruments, uses us to subdue the world of matter to its will. We cannot help ourselves in this, I say, since—except in the mystic and occasionally in the artist—life has not yet reached a level at which it can be content to contemplate what is ; it must still strive unceasingly to bring to birth that which is not.

But the changes which life bids us make in what we love are not in question here, or are so but rarely. We are ruining the country as a place of beauty for the eye and a source of refreshment for the spirit not because we love it, but because we do not ; because, as I have said, we are no longer natural creatures coming easily to terms of accommodation with a natural environment, but artificial beings who are oppressed with a sense of strangeness and otherness when alone with unpruned nature. And so to escape from our embarrassment we take it out of nature by trying to assimilate her to ourselves. Nature as she is makes us all ill at ease ; very well, then, we will capture her and civilize her, even though her soul eludes us in the process.

## THE FUTURE OF LEISURE

Just think of the things we feel constrained to do ! As I write I can look out of my window upon Hampstead Heath. Year by year upon that tormented bit of ground I have seen the paths grow wider and the grass sparser. In the war it was used as a womb for the gestation of vegetables ; to-day it is covered with a network of roads and asphalt paths and running tracks, and even those parts reserved by the authorities for grass are nearly bald. In 1925 Kenwood was added and from the reinforcement of this tract of comparatively untouched land we expected much benefit. But Kenwood in a wild state was an offence to the guardians of London's open spaces. Their fingers were itching to be at it, and scarcely did it become national property when stakes were driven in, wires were stretched across, fences erected, asphalt paths laid down, while notice boards sprouted by the hundred. There are few places from which the prospect does not include one of these, from most it holds many. To trees are affixed wire baskets for the reception of litter.

Or consider our forests. Everywhere we plant firs, and regiment the sweet irregularity of our woodlands with serried lines of conifers. A hundred and fifty years ago the trees of southern England were the oak, the ash, the beech and the

## THE MISUSES OF LEISURE

elm; to them we looked for our wooden walls, while pines were the ornamental luxury of the eighteenth century gentleman's garden. In the nineteenth century came a use for pines as pitprops, and after "the great war" that ended in Waterloo the inevitable crowds of unemployed soldiers were set to work to plant them. Meanwhile wooden ships were superseded, and the commercial value of the oak and the ash declined. With what result? In 1927 in England south of the Thames the firs outnumbered all the other trees put together, while the oak and the ash bid fair within the next fifty years to subside into the rôle of the occasional ornaments of gardens and parks. Nowhere are these changes to be seen more clearly than in the New Forest. Under the influence of that efficient and, from the pit-prop point of view, expert body, the Forestry Commission, vast areas of once enchanted woodland are surrendered to the commercial utility of the alien, self-seeding conifers. The pines blight everything that comes within their malign influence. Flowers wither away, cattle pastures dry up, the birds take flight. Those who have known the Forest woodlands either in the leafage of early spring, or in their autumn gold, or glittering in their winter constellations of coral-red

## THE FUTURE OF LEISURE

holly berries, will admit that the loss of their beauty would be a national calamity. Yet within a hundred years, if the present policy continues, destroyed it will assuredly be, and the old green-land enchantment, wiped nearly off the map, will yield to garden suburbs in the woods, nurseries for fir-tree pit-props, and poultry farms managed by maiden ladies.

Meanwhile our woodlands are preserved. Stockbrokers like to shoot pheasants; the birds are at all times an easy mark, and can be bred in sufficient numbers to make failure to hit them difficult. As a matter of fact drives occur in which prodigious numbers are killed, and fat sportsmen distribute the trophies of their skill among their admiring friends. To facilitate this slaughter the little animals who live in woods are ruthlessly exterminated. Hedgehogs, it seems, eat pheasants' eggs and the stoat must not be permitted to rob the "sportsman" of his prey. Who does not know those melancholy rows of little dead creatures, stoats, weasels, moles, and hedgehogs, strung up on some prominent tree or bush, presumably to discourage the others. The pheasant, though decorative, is a dull bird, and it is a shame that the woods should be denuded of life that it alone may live. But we cannot escape progress. In a hundred years, I have said, there

## THE MISUSES OF LEISURE

will be only pines ; but the remark must now be qualified. There will be pines only where there are not pheasants.

Again, we create beauty spots, and pride ourselves on saving what we have created. Beauty spots, as everyone knows, are places saved from the speculative builder by the munificence of rich men, and handed over to the National Trust for the benefit of the nation. And yet, paradoxically enough, what is saved is often the thing least worth saving. For consider what happens. Every year some half dozen famous places are threatened : Birling Gap or Savernake Forest is in danger of the builder ; the War Office want the Surrey Commons or the cliffs round Lulworth ; a lake in the Welsh hills is to be appropriated to supply water to a big industrial town, or a road is to be driven over the Sty Head Pass. People begin to write letters to the press ; there is a growing volume of protest, and in due course one of the big dailies takes the matter up and begins to rumble with indignation, as if it were the national bowels. A fund is formed to buy for the nation. It is of course lamentably inadequate, but the public-spirited owner holds to the last possible moment in the hope of being able to sell for the benefit of the nation at a reasonable

## THE FUTURE OF LEISURE

price. Not to be outdone in public spirit, a private individual, who usually prefers to remain anonymous, intervenes in the nick of time, contributes the requisite amount and presents the threatened area to the nation. Everybody heaves a sigh of relief: another beauty spot has been saved. And what precisely does that mean?

There are still in England hundreds of square miles of lovely country, of downs, or woodland, or moorland, or mountain. Somewhere in the middle of one of these tracts there is a small area, which has come to be known as a beauty spot. Sometimes there is reason for the choice; two rivers meet, there is an especially big tree, or a celebrity has been born, has written a book, has married or died there; or there are hot springs, or devils' steps, or a punch bowl, or a cave. Often it is quite arbitrary. The "beauty spot" is rarely, if ever, more lovely than the surrounding country; often, as in the case of the Valley of the Rocks at Lynton, it is less so. But because it is a "beauty spot", it is mentioned in the guide books, it attracts tourists, it becomes a rendezvous for charr-a-banc and motor cars, it gives birth to tea shanties and is immortalized in picture postcards. Round it and upon it there accretes a scurf of bags and

## THE MISUSES OF LEISURE

orange peel, and newspapers and empty tins and cigarette packets. For when civilized man comes into the country he leaves the litter of civilization behind him.<sup>1</sup> Newlands Corner on a Sunday evening exemplifies the fate of the beauty spot; cars are packed ten deep, picnic parties are scattered over the turf, the smell of petrol assaults the nose, and the honks of motor horns the ears. The men of tin and brass are everywhere rejoicing in the dustbin they have made. Now this is the sort of place which, as the result of one of our great public efforts, is "saved"; but the surrounding country, the miles of downland or woodland of which it is the little vulgarized core, is not. And because nobody knows about this, and because only a few cranks would care, even if they knew, more of England's country is year by year desecrated and submerged. It may be justly said of our generation that it found England a land of beauty and left it a land of "beauty spots".

Meanwhile our towns proliferate like great wens and spread increasingly over

<sup>1</sup> In a part of Surrey famous for its beauty there was recently held a motor cycle paper chase. The "hares" carried long paper streamers which they trailed continuously over the country side for miles. Remains of the streamers lay about for a good six months after the event.

## THE FUTURE OF LEISURE

the countryside. The industrial revolution in fact has entered upon a new phase. The coming of this phase is as little recognized at the time as was that of its predecessors, and because it is not recognized it is not controlled. Yet its consequences are likely to prove no less disastrous than those of the earlier phases. A hundred and twenty years ago on the threshold of the industrial age men swarmed into the towns ; to accommodate them these were extended without plan or forethought, with the result that squalid agglomerations of bricks and mortar disfigure the northern half of the country, while we defray to-day in infant mortality, foul air, ugliness, and overcrowding the cost of the quick profits and boundless prosperity upon which our ancestors prided themselves.

To-day the tide has turned and the population again flows outward. Aided by electric suburban trains and the all-conquering car, the expanding middle-classes find the country within their reach and, like a swarm of locusts, spread themselves over the land destroying all they touch. Pride coupled with the desire to avoid contact with the neighbours causes them to cover as wide an area as possible. Hence, instead of coalescing round a centre these new suburban agglomerations are centrifugal.



## THE MISUSES OF LEISURE

Long lines of villas are extended to infinity into the surrounding country, flanked by outlying bungaloid growths. We who inhabit them are in the main young, newly-married people. We are intent on keeping ourselves to ourselves and are accordingly separated from each other by gardens of about a quarter of an acre in extent. We all of us own cars, and our garages, symbols of the coming domination of machines, impend largely over the pigmy residences of their owners. We find it the easier to spread ourselves in the matter of the garage because of our economies in the matter of the nursery. I have an aunt who lives 15 miles southwest of London. In her road there are 32 houses, 30 cars, 25 dogs, and 17 children.

Thus extended we pride ourselves on living a country life, and talk largely about the benefits of open air, our immunity from dust and noise, and our freedom from the dangers of being overlooked. But those of us who are men go to town daily by the 8.50, and do not return until the 6.30, while the women follow our example, whenever they can spare the money for shopping or a *matinée*, which is about three times a week. Except for Saturday afternoon, when we go out in the car, we are never in the country at all. We are cut adrift from facilities for social intercourse,

## THE FUTURE OF LEISURE

and we have no civic responsibilities. We are even denied the consolations of religion. Places spring up (for example, the sprawl of houses between Sutton and Merton) with populations of 10,000 and religious provision for 400. Dagenham, which will soon be as large as Southampton, has the church and chapel accommodation of a small town, and even this is not fully used. Cut off from the life of the spirit, keeping ourselves to ourselves, suspecting our neighbours, living in one place and sleeping in another, we pass our lives in perpetual transit between workshop and dormitory. We lack the strength of those whose roots are in the soil; we are deprived of the social pleasures of those who live in a community.

And year by year, as transit grows more rapid, we eat up more of the country; year by year the advancing tide of bungalows and villas runs higher. In its path spring up garages and petrol pumps and advertisement hoardings, the abiding monuments of the men of tin and brass; behind it there is washed up a débris of rubbish heaps and paper and cans; against it the countryside is wired and fenced in as against an invading army. Vast areas of many miles in extent are already inundated, while the English country, afflicted with a spreading

## THE MISUSES OF LEISURE

rash of irritable pink, languishes as though stricken by a mortal disease.

It has been truly said of our generation that it has discovered the country. We spawn over it in our hideous dwellings, we drive pitilessly over it for our pleasure, we rifle it and tame it, and make it tidy and uniform and regular and genteel, and every now and then we dress it up in beauty spots, that we may render it a land fit for stockbrokers and actresses to joy-ride in. We do these things to the country because we do not know how to enjoy it, because it intimidates us when we enter it, making us feel little and strange and vulgar. And to punish it and put ourselves at ease with it we make it vulgar like ourselves, stamping the marks of our civilization indelibly upon it.

So tamed and vulgarized Nature may indeed be taken by storm and enjoyed by time-table; such goods as she has to offer are pre-eminently purchaseable and can be fully savoured during a week-end; but it is her body only that will be enjoyed, a body from which the spirit will have fled. Nor can it be easily recalled. In a few score years we are destroying an essence, the essence of the English countryside, which it has taken centuries to distill, and our descendants will seek in vain to recapture

## THE FUTURE OF LEISURE

what we have so wantonly squandered. We all of us have an instinctive need for country sights and sounds, and a desire for occasional solitude. This need and this desire are thwarted by our urban civilization, and those in whom they are unsatisfied live tired and listless lives, devoid of beauty and lacking in instinctive satisfaction. It is right, then, that we should spend our leisure in the country, and seek in it that refreshment of the spirit that our working lives deny.

The first phase of the industrial revolution turned our cities into slums; the second is turning our country into villas. The first ruined the towns, the second is ruining the country. This, then, is the charge against our generation, that having inherited the loveliest countryside in the world, we have pillaged and polluted it, handing on our inheritance diminished and vulgarized to our descendants, so that, even if they learn to use their leisure rightly, one of the means to right enjoyment will be lacking.

*Motors.*—Sixty miles an hour is not sixty times more wonderful than one mile an hour. A place is not automatically rendered inferior in point of interest or beauty to other places by the circumstance of one's being at it.

The first of these propositions should

## THE MISUSES OF LEISURE

be obvious to all, and the second will be doubted only by the very humble. Yet the use of leisure for the purpose of motoring, that is, of moving rapidly from place to place for the sake of moving, implies a denial of both. Leisured persons who own cars seem to be in a state of perpetual flight from one place to another, in the endeavour to escape from something unpleasant which is waiting to pounce on them at whatever place they happen to be. On no other assumption is the behaviour of those motoring for pleasure explicable.

Is it that they wish to see the country? Certainly not. Everybody knows that the only way to see the country is (1) to go on foot, (2) to avoid roads. Besides, motorists do not see the country, but only the hinder parts of other people's motors in front, and the blackened or dust-covered hedges on either side. For the average motorist, moreover, the country does not exist; there are only beauty spots, golf courses, and watering places.

Is it to rest the nerves or to attain a calm and contemplative attitude of mind? The effort to pass other cars and the ambition to do the journey in record time, preclude any such possibility. Before they take to cars men are forewarned against the itch to overtake, and, when first they drive, they fight

## THE FUTURE OF LEISURE

against its insidious appeal ; they will dawdle, they say, and enjoy the country ; no feverish hustle for them. What's the hurry ? But sooner or later the best of them succumb. I have succumbed myself.

Is it for the exhilaration that comes of the open air, the sense of speed, and the wind in one's face ? The effect of motoring in the open air is to produce not exhilaration but the reverse. One arrives after a motor journey all liver and no legs ; one's mind is asleep, one's body tired ; one is bored, irritable and listless ; one has no zest for life ; one has not even an appetite for food ; it is only after the body has been stimulated with a cocktail that it can be brought to eat its dinner. No stimulation can avail the mind, since there are only other motorists to talk to. The women are irritable and have headaches. Such is the result of motoring for any length of time in the open air. But each year an increasing number of cars are closed. As for the sense of speed the average railway train is faster in the country, the average pedestrian in the town.

It is, we will suppose, a Sunday evening and you are returning to town in your car after your day in the country. So are others. So much so, that the Worthing road is one long procession of cars head

## THE MISUSES OF LEISURE

to tail stretching for miles. The cars move forward at about a yard at a time, and at Dorking the jam is so bad that chief inspectors of police take point duty and constables are stationed at every yard through the town. A solid block of vehicles occupies the whole length of road beyond Leatherhead, and traffic endeavouring to go in the opposite direction is at a standstill. You have chosen a side road to make progress, but find this choked as well. When the new Kingston by-pass road was opened in the autumn of 1927, cars three abreast progressed at the rate of half a mile in seventy minutes, the procession being swollen by fresh cars at the rate of fifty a minute. A solid block of vehicles two miles long extended from Richmond Park to the Kingston Vale cemetery. No! Motoring does not pander to our sense of speed. Indeed, the lust for speed increasingly stultifies itself. The faster we try to go the slower do we succeed in going, so that in London at the hub of civilization, where progress is exhibited at the height of its development clear for all to see, we have almost stopped moving altogether. Mr. Lloyd George tells us that he used to allow ten minutes to go from the House of Commons to Euston in a hansom; now he drives in a Rolls Royce and takes twenty.

## THE FUTURE OF LEISURE

Is it for the sake of danger and sense of adventure? Here there is ground for hope. Motoring grows yearly more dangerous, and, if the risks go on increasing at the present rate, we should at no distant date succeed in killing one another off altogether. In an old guide to London written in 1902 I find a tirade against the large increase of cyclists who have "added another terror to wayfarers crossing the road". In that year the street accidents in London amounted to 3,500. In 1927 the number of street accidents in London had increased to 44,147 in which 48,049 people were injured and 1,049 killed. During the last six years throughout the country as a whole, fatal traffic injuries have increased by 55 and injuries by 125 per cent. In 1927 in England and Wales 4,701 persons were killed and 135,130 injured in road and street accidents, for the bulk of which private cars and taxicabs were responsible.

This is very interesting; the number of new cars put on the road in this country averages nearly 3,000 weekly. In the first few months of 1928 the number was about 4,000 a week, while during Easter of that year it was estimated that 1,400,000 private motor cars and motor bicycles were on the road, or eight for every  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile of roads of all sorts in the



## THE MISUSES OF LEISURE

country. There is, therefore, good reason to hope that in a hundred years motoring will have become so fatal a pursuit, that it will have been prohibited as a criminal occupation by Act of Parliament—unless, that is, motorists have not succeeded long before in rendering themselves innocuous by welding their cars together in one solid and inextricable jam.

*Inns and Hotels.*—It had been raining steadily since two o'clock and we were wet through, wet from top to toe, wet from coat to skin, wet with the wetness to which even the best mackintoshes at last gave way and become mere sponges for the absorption of moisture. As we approached the village of A—— we wondered apprehensively whether the hotel could take us; we were not in a mood to beard strange landladies, nor was our appearance such as to prepossess; besides it was past seven o'clock and we were very hungry. The hotel was full; they could give us a meal, but they could not sleep us. They suggested we tried Mrs. Smith for rooms, which we did and drew blank.

It was then that cold, hungry, and thoroughly bad-tempered, I came upon The —— (you will see in a moment why I cannot reveal its name). An insignificant-looking pub standing in a row of houses in

## THE FUTURE OF LEISURE

the main street, it had the appearance of one of those places that, forgetful of their proper function, supply drink but deny both food and bed to the traveller. The bar, through which lay the only entrance, was full of Saturday night drinkers, and the proprietress, a fat woman wreathed in smiles, was busy serving drinks. Hesitatingly, I asked her if she had any rooms to let for the night. She had, and in spite of our repellent appearance, in spite of the moisture that ran down our necks and the little pools of water that formed round us on the floor as we stood and parleyed, she would and did take us in. Further, she dried our clothes, gave us hot rum to drink to keep the wet out and hot baths to complete the work of the rum; she lent us overcoats to cover our pyjamas, gave us ham and eggs and coffee for supper in a little room off the bar, and smiled at us like a benediction as we had them and listened to the singing. The singing, by the way, was local talent; we did not see a sign of wireless or gramophones in the pub. More ham and eggs for breakfast with cream and home-made jam, and the price for the lot was six shillings each. Six shillings each for supper, bed and breakfast, home-made jam, a hostess glad to see you and no wireless, in a pub in the

## THE MISUSES OF LEISURE

Home Counties ! These things are true, I swear it ! Now you see why I cannot disclose its name.

Next day there was sun and wind, and about five o'clock in the afternoon we came to the county town of I.—. Being dry, though dusty, our appearance was not so repellent to the eye as on the previous evening at A——, so we went boldly into the first hotel we saw and asked for tea. It was a large hotel, and two serried ranks of cars were drawn up in front of it. Motorists were standing in the porch and washing in the lavatory ; motorists sat and smoked in the lounge ; the dining room was full of motorists. Having been propelled for the greater part of the day through the air at considerable speed, they were cold, numbed and dazed. Also lack of exercise, over-eating and boredom appeared to have affected their tempers.

Whatever the reason each motorist seemed to be chiefly engaged in staring disapprovingly at the other motorists, until we appeared, when they one and all stared disapprovingly at us. What right had we miserable pedestrians, so hot, so dusty and above all so uncompromisingly healthy, to insinuate ourselves into the company of our superiors ? They had chivvied us on the roads until they had chivvied us off them altogether, and

## THE FUTURE OF LEISURE

seeing the roads deserted by walkers they had naturally supposed that walkers no longer existed. For the motorist the country is composed of roads that link the metropolis with beauty spots such as Newlands Corner and the South Coast watering places ; for the rest there is, no doubt, an intermediate tract between the roads presumably inhabited by rustics, tramps, and artists, but it never occurs to him that one may walk there. Hence if there are no walkers on the roads, the presumption is that there are no walkers at all. Yet here we still were, hot and untidy as ever, not only not eliminated but actually venturing to intrude ourselves into decent hotels. The hotel staff seemed to share the views of the motorists. Reluctantly, since they could not turn us away, they found us an obscure table hidden in a corner where we should offend their regular patrons as little as possible, and reluctantly they brought us bread and butter, jam in which the strawberry, the gooseberry, the rhubarb, and that which was not fruit at all were glued in an amorphous mess, and those peculiar substances called cakes coyly ensconced in frilled papers, with which high-class English hotels tax the digestions of clients. For this they charged us two shillings each, and, when we had eaten as much as we dared, they bade

## THE MISUSES OF LEISURE

us go away to make room for more motorists.

Such is the country welcome to-day. For the inn at A— is palpably a survival; it has strayed, by an oversight as it were, from the past when the country was the country, into the present when it is the poor relation of the town patronized by motorists. Such places still exist in the north of England, but they are vanishing rapidly from the South and the Home Counties know them no more. Throughout the length and breadth of Surrey there is no longer an inn which will give food and drink and bed at a modest price to the walker; there are only pubs that serve drink to the natives, and hotels that provide bought cakes for motorists. I give the pub at A— another five years at most; at the end of that time it will be bought by a trust, serve expensive dinners and bad wines, and despise all those who do not ride in cars. The pub at A— is a relic from the past; the hotel at L— is the hotel of the future.

*Animals.*—A frequent use of leisure is for the purpose of hunting and terrifying animals. There are many people who consider that the good life consists in depriving other creatures of life. Modern man belongs to the only species that

## THE FUTURE OF LEISURE

consistently kills creatures for purposes other than those of food, holding up his hands the while in civilized horror at the doings of Nature red in tooth and claw. It is difficult at certain seasons of the year for the upper and more educated classes of this island to spend a day in the country without relieving their boredom by killing large numbers of grouse, pheasants, and partridges. Those on a slightly lower social scale kill rabbits. The very rich concentrate on half-blinded pigeons at Monte Carlo.

Man is curious, moreover, about animals. To put them in prison and observe their habits piques his interest and flatters his sense of superiority. How like himself they are, and yet, how gratifyingly different ! The uses of tamed or enslaved animals are indeed very numerous. They appeal, for example, to man's sense of humour, also to his affections. He, or rather she, can sentimentalize about them, and make facetious comments about their domestic habits. The accounts with which our brighter reporters enliven the daily papers of the matings and the quarrellings, the melancholies and the meditations of the prisoners at the Zoo, are among the most sickening features of modern journalism. The imprisonment of wild creatures is thus one of the chief solaces

## THE MISUSES OF LEISURE

of leisure ; it enables us to feel at once superior, sentimental, and humorous ; we enjoy the powers of the jailor, elevate our small children onto the backs of big elephants, and make jokes at the expense of the creatures we degrade. Men are cruel, no doubt, but it is because they lack imagination rather than because they are wicked that they employ their leisure in diverting themselves with the restless paces of the imprisoned. Until, however, they outgrow the habits of their childhood, the world's Zoos will continue to inflict lifetimes of misery and boredom upon the uncomprehending victims of man's callousness and conceit.

Animals or parts of animals are also used for purposes of protection and adornment. The former use may be pardoned since we have insisted in evolving into a species so ridiculously unfitted to our environment, that it is only by covering ourselves with the skins of other animals that we can withstand the vagaries of the climate. The latter must be accounted among the delights of leisure. In all ages human beings have loved to deck themselves with portions of their fellow-creatures, and wings, heads, feathers, and in some cases stuffed bodies of wild birds are still worn about the persons of the females of the species, who believe that by this means they will

## THE FUTURE OF LEISURE

increase their attractiveness to the males.<sup>1</sup> Birds, indeed, are useful from many points of view and must be numbered among the chief solaces of leisure. They can be placed behind metal wires and inspected at leisure, and, if the right kinds are selected, will sing sweetly to show their pleasure in captivity. The sweetness of the song is found in certain cases to be increased if the precaution is first taken of putting out the eyes of the bird, and many are blinded accordingly.

Our pleasure in the antics of performing animals is, I am glad to say, already on the wane. Men still behave like beasts in order that they may induce beasts to behave like idiots, but the taste for imbecility in wild creatures is not what it was. We can only hope that our pleasure as jailors will shortly follow our pleasure as animal lunatic asylum

<sup>1</sup> In spite of the Plumage Bill of 1921, a considerable number of feathers and skins of birds are still smuggled into the country. According to figures given by Lord Danesfort in the House of Lords, a consignment of 136,800 skins of the grebe was recently seized by the Customs, while prohibited feathers to the value of £1,555 were found in the false bottom of a crate from Japan. It is impossible to tell how many get through undetected. The continuance of the traffic and the willingness of the smugglers to take risks, are attributed to the keen desire of women for the feathers and skins of these birds, for which they will pay very large prices.



## THE MISUSES OF LEISURE

visitors into the limbo of pursuits that we have outgrown.

*Spending Money.*—I spoke earlier of the modern notion of entertainment as something for which one pays. Having lost the capacity to amuse ourselves we pay other people to do our amusing for us. Since to the modern mind leisure and amusement are synonymous terms, it follows that spending money is one of the chief occupations of leisure. Our attainments in the art of spending money are on a level with our general attainments in the art of living. Nor does anybody trouble to instruct us. The papers are full of advertisements offering to teach the art or craft of making money, but no expert comes forward and teaches us how to spend it. Spending money is, it is thought, a matter for individual discretion; tastes differ, and it is impossible to decide for other people what will give them most pleasure.

This no doubt is, within limits, true. It is no part of my thesis that there is one type of good life for all men, or that all should obtain pleasure in the same way. But that some things do on the whole give more pleasure than others, and that some ways of spending money are more effective than others is equally true, and it is a fact that people's expenditure

## THE FUTURE OF LEISURE

is not organized in such a way as to obtain for them the greatest amount of satisfaction. Take food, for example. The ordinary member of the middle classes takes four meals a day ; in consuming them he spends, or can spend if he chooses, not less than three hours. Assuming that his effective waking life consists roughly of fifteen hours out of the twenty-four, we may say that he spends a fifth of his time in eating. Give him the normal span of seventy years' existence and we obtain the result that no less than fourteen years of his life are devoted to the process of passing solid and liquid substances through a hole at the bottom of his face. In view of the frequency with which we perform this process and the length of time on an aggregate over which it extends, is it not reasonable to derive as much satisfaction from it as possible ? Animals have the same need and perform the same process ; human beings show their superiority, if they are wise, by utilizing the necessity for satisfying a need as an opportunity for practising an art. They cultivate their palates and refine their tastes.

Considerations of this kind are, however, lost upon the average English housewife. Our Puritanical ancestors recommended us to mortify the flesh, and our cooks take full advantage of the exhortation.

## THE MISUSES OF LEISURE

To pay too much attention to the niceties of diet, that is to say, to obtaining æsthetic pleasure through the sense of taste, is thought to be self-indulgent and to indicate a materialistic outlook, although nobody makes the same charge against those who go to a concert in order to obtain æsthetic pleasure through the sense of hearing. To prevent us from being self-indulgent in the matter of food our cooks spare no pains, and our cooking as a consequence is among the most unappetizing in the civilized world. English cooks do not prepare a meal; they take it out of tins; they do not cook things; they heat them up. The preparation of vegetables is putting cabbages in water, of meat, the turning of beef into leather. As a consequence our digestions suffer and our tempers wait upon our digestions.

Nor is it true that we economize on food in order to spend our money on preferred pleasures. In spite of its simplicity our diet is costly and wasteful. The saying that a whole French family could live for a week on what an English cook throws away is quite a reasonable exaggeration. There are many inexpensive foods, salads for example, that we refuse to touch because we have never touched them, and our wives refuse to prepare because their preparation

## THE FUTURE OF LEISURE

demands skill and trouble. But they can put lettuce in a bowl and pour some oil over it.

It is the desire to mortify the flesh that is, no doubt, responsible for our beds in which we pass half our lives and our boots in which we pass the other half. It is certain that the Englishman understands neither, but while he is prepared to ruin his digestion, pass uncomfortable nights, and let his feet proliferate into corns for fear of giving his body pleasure, he is a glutton for baths. The immersion of the skin in hot water is indeed the only form of fleshly sensual indulgence not forbidden by English Puritanism. As a consequence the Englishman, and still more the Englishwoman, indulges in it without scruple or moderation, and, having taken care to deprive her skin of its natural oils and fats complains of the climate because she catches colds. As for furniture, we are satisfied with gimcrack and inconvenient sideboards, chests of drawers which open and shut under protest, uneasy chairs, and tables that stand unequally on four legs. We still put too many things in a room, and we still find it necessary to cover most of them up.

We spend money for the privilege of sitting in carbonic acid gas in public houses, in the dark at cinemas and amid

## THE MISUSES OF LEISURE

the cacophonous strains of negroid music in cafés, tea shops, and restaurants. That modern dancing is one of the most remarkable forms of "entertainment" that the folly of man has ever imposed upon his credulity will be generally admitted. The old-fashioned waltz was an aid to love; the minuet and the quadrille were always dignified and, on occasion, beautiful; the lancers, the shottische, the highland fling, even the polka quickened the blood, raised the spirits and conduced to a general gaiety; Sir Roger was a sociable affair in which all could join. Laughter, romance, and the joy of movement, these have been associated with dancing from time immemorial. But which of these good things is achieved by the modern dance? The dancers fall into two sharply defined groups; there are the old young people, and the young old people. Clutching one another in ungraceful postures they move slowly about the floor; their gait is solemn, their faces sad; they rarely speak and never smile; they are not care-free but sullenly and deliberately careless. There is no beauty in their movements, and, if they love each other, they have inhibited all reference to the fact for the duration of the dance. This rite is pursued to the accompaniment of a series of morbid and depressing

## THE FUTURE OF LEISURE

sounds resembling nothing so much as the boomings of love-sick kine, which only their well accentuated rhythm proclaims to be remotely related to music. Hearing them one wonders why they should ever have begun, or why, having begun, they should ever cease. The only possible excuse for such noises is that one should dance to them. That they should be made as they are made in cadenas and tea shops whither middle-class ladies flock daily at eleven and four-thirty to see and to be seen, is an outrage. Music at meals is in any event indefensible; it spoils three good things, music, eating, and talking; it is only the decay of the art of conversation that could ever have made it possible. But that we should drink tea and converse to the strains of such music. . . .

*Books.*—Finally there are books. We spend some money on books but not much. This is not the place for a dissertation on the pleasures of reading. Reading has been praised well and often by all the great essayists from Lamb and Hazlitt downwards, and I do not wish to say badly what they have said to perfection. Nor do I wish to defend Ruskin's remark, that if a book is worth reading it is worth buying; it is too sweeping, and there are works such as the *Encyclopædia* to which it fails to apply. But there is

## THE MISUSES OF LEISURE

moderation in all things, and the alternative to buying all the books you like is not necessarily to buy none at all. And it is a fact that the average man's annual purchase of books is practically negligible. The most popular books, in the sense of the books most widely bought, are school books, and they are not purchased by those who have to read them. For the rest the popularity of even the most popular novelist is as nothing compared with that of a jockey, a cinema actress, or a tennis star.

Take, for example, the most popular novel of recent years, A. S. M. Hutchinson's *If Winter Comes*. It is estimated that in the first sixteen months after its publication there were sold in Great Britain about 200,000 copies. This sale, which constitutes a prodigious literary success, means that out of every hundred adult persons one actually bought the book. On the other hand out of every hundred adult persons over fifty buy a Sunday paper every Sunday of the year. Whereas the nation spends 315 millions a year on drinks, and 180 millions on tobacco, it spends six on books. The fact is that we do not buy books; we steal them, we borrow them, we forget to return them, but we do not buy them. Sooner than buy them we will even write them; in one sense indeed, we write more books than

## THE FUTURE OF LEISURE

we buy. Sir Ernest Benn estimates that thirty books are written for every one published, and two out of three published are failures. Hence ninety books are written for every one that is bought in sufficient numbers to be called a success.

Nor can we complain of a lack of effort to bring books to our notice. 12,000 books are published yearly, and there are 11,000 booksellers. If every bookseller employs two assistants, it follows that three men are engaged for nearly a year in selling one book. "What are you going to give her for a birthday present?" "I thought of giving her a book." "Oh, don't give her a book, she has one already." The reply adequately represents the conventional attitude.

I have promised not to write a dissertation on the joys of reading, and I will keep my promise. But there are certain things which must be said with special reference to the value of reading as an employment of leisure.

Reading is of all the ways of spending leisure one of the most satisfactory, because :—

(i) It requires no special apparatus such as special clothes, boots, rods, clubs, racquets, dogs, tracks, bats, balls, or lady friends.

(ii) Unlike games it does not depend upon the existence and presence of other



## THE MISUSES OF LEISURE

persons. (Patience and Solitaire are exceptions to this generalization.)

(iii) It does not presuppose any special mood or state of mind on the part of the reader, or of weather on the part of the climate. There are books for all moods and all weathers.

(iv) It is not dependent upon time and place, and can be enjoyed for five minutes in a bus as well as for five hours in a library.

(v) It has, or can have, a valuable effect upon the reader, awakening his curiosity, stimulating his intelligence and enhancing the interest of the world in which he lives.

(vi) It diverts his attention from matter and brings him into contact with objects of thought.<sup>1</sup>

Wherefore I say let the wise man go nowhere without his book. Even if it is at most five minutes that he can hope to devote to it, still let him take it. In these days we have time neither for leisurely reading nor for leisurely literature. We must read, when we read at all, in little gobbets of time hastily snatched from the exacting calls of work or the still more arduous duties of "pleasure". We must read in bed or during meals, or on the grass with a pipe on Sundays; we must

<sup>1</sup> See last section, pages 94-96, for an explanation of this remark.

## THE FUTURE OF LEISURE

read on buses, on station platforms, or going to the office in the train. And so we arrive at the grand rule which all who value their leisure and know how to use it follow, never go anywhere without a book.

First, for expected occasions, take a book ; take it on journeys and take it on visits to the dentist ; take it to funerals and take it to weddings, to meals in restaurants, to lectures, picnics, parties and public meetings. You never know when you may be bored, and to take a book is to take you out of bad company and to put you among good.

Secondly, for unexpected occasions, take a book ; you never know when you may not be held up. You may miss your train and be stranded at a junction ; why should you be thrown helpless on such fare as the railway bookstall affords ? Take your book. You go for a walk and break your ankle or get lost ; why should you sit idle and moping, cursing your fate and looking at the rain until you are found and rescued ? Take your book. You are with relations or other persons whom you dislike ; the conversation is even more intolerable than you remembered ; you follow Herbert Spencer, put on your ear-flaps and take out your book. Finally, in face of the known uncertainty of life, a strain of humility is becoming in all mortal creatures. We never know when

## THE MISUSES OF LEISURE

it may please the Almighty to take us ; we have no right to assume that we shall be at once wafted into the enjoyment of celestial bliss ; there may be a waiting period, and a dull one ; very well, then, take your book.

Some there are who regard reading as a distraction from life ; they read books as they drink coffee or chew gum, taking them as an opiate to take them out of themselves, and they have such pleasure as they deserve. But rightly considered, a book is an enhancement of rather than a distraction from life. It helps us to see in life more beauty, more passion, more scope for our sympathy and interest than we saw before, and, in making us realize life more keenly, it helps us to realize ourselves. Therefore, I say, if you would find significance in the most trivial incidents, if you would see your fellows, not as a drove of meaningless creatures doing pointless things, but as actors in the most moving of all the dramas, the most fascinating of all peepshows, take with you as you go through life the great commentators and interpreters of life ; take, in other words, your book.

Of our misuses of leisure I have said enough. The examples given do not cover the whole field, but they are typical. For those who wish to push their researches further, I would recommend a study of

## THE FUTURE OF LEISURE

the pictures in the daily papers on the day succeeding a Bank Holiday. The object of these pictures is to show people how they enjoyed themselves, and they provide, therefore, an excellent bird's eye view of the methods we find it necessary to adopt when called upon to enjoy a holiday. I have a page of such pictures before me. All represent crowds of persons herding uncomfortably together in pursuit of some common and more or less unattractive goal. One picture is of a jam of immobile cars, another of adults struggling for the privilege of riding upon the Zoo elephants, another of a crowd at Brighton looking for Mr. Lobby Lud, another of people queuing up for a performance on the pier. Queues, indeed, are an ever recurrent feature, for what one wants to do must be done by all, and the pursuits of all exert a compelling force upon the one. And speaking of queues, I read that "Mrs. X who had been waiting outside the early doors of the Y Theatre for over twenty-four hours for the first night of the — Girl, when asked how she passed the time, said, 'Oh, I just love waiting in a queue. There's always plenty of company and I like someone to talk to. I'd much sooner be queuing up for a good show than sitting with the old man at home.'" This is, perhaps, the strangest use of leisure which I have to record.

## THE MISUSES OF LEISURE

The examples I have given show, I think, that on the whole we find our leisure a nuisance and an embarrassment. It is only as a relief from the strain of over-work that it is tolerated, and, when it is prolonged after the strain is relieved, we do not know what to do with it.

This attitude to leisure has grown during the last hundred years ; it is still growing, and it ought to be diminished. It is peculiarly characteristic of the outlook of the modern business man, and its prevalence is due to the important place which business occupies in modern civilization. Business to the American is life's great adventure ; it is sport, work, pleasure, beauty and patriotism rolled into one. If the business man plays golf, it is, as he will tell you, to keep himself fit for business ; if he takes a holiday, he is submitting to boredom for the same reason. The needs of business which dominate our lives increasingly determine the character of our education. Vocational education in America is exclusively embraced at the newer universities, and makes headway at the old ones. Those who are governed by the stomach and pocket view of life inevitable demand of every activity in which they are asked to engage, that it shall deliver " the goods ". Thus education is valued not for its own sake, but only in so far as it helps

## THE FUTURE OF LEISURE

the student to get on in life, and fits him for a career. Engineering, agriculture, book-keeping, accountancy are praised but literature, philosophy, and even "history" are thought to be a waste of time. As a consequence vast numbers of young men and women are let loose upon the world with no thought beyond the counting house and the factory, and none of that early kindling of interest and awakening of curiosity, which is the basis of a right use of leisure in later life. It is necessary that we should have some objective interest in impersonal things, an interest which is pursued irrespective of the possibility that it may advantage us, if we are to cultivate tastes as opposed to gratifying appetites. A knowledge of philosophy, for instance, does not increase our income, make us dominating personalities or turn us into social successes. It ministers indeed to nothing, but man's disinterested curiosity about the universe; yet for this very reason, because in other words it does not deliver any specifiable goods, should it be cultivated. As I pointed out on an earlier page, only acquired tastes are of permanent value, and tastes are acquired only through training and as the result of effort. And of those enjoyments which depend upon the cultivation of taste, of a book by the fireside, a walk in the country, a delight in natural

## THE MISUSES OF LEISURE

beauty, the pursuit of a hobby, or a conversation for its own sake, the modern world is increasingly incapable. Instead it excites its appetites and, as appetite grows on what it feeds on, it demands increasingly sensational fare.

Now let us take a look into the future.

Let us suppose for the sake of argument that the economic contentions of the socialists are sound, that inequalities of wealth can be abolished and industry so organized that all those who care to work can be assured of comfort and a competence. The intensive application of science to industry, by enormously increasing productivity, may be presumed to have diminished the necessary hours of human labour, so that the world is supplied not only with necessities but with a sufficiency of luxuries on the basis of a universal four or five hours' day. I have no knowledge of economics, and do not wish to assert, therefore, that these things will happen; it is sufficient for my purpose to point out that in the opinion of many competent judges there is no reason in theory why they should not happen. The average income of the adult American worker is already over £150 a year, and in the last thirty years I understand it has risen by over a third. A continuous increase in wealth at the same rate in the

## THE FUTURE OF LEISURE

future, coupled with equality of distribution, might very well produce an economic millenium of the kind imagined. Assuming, therefore, that people are reasonable and that the transition to Socialism is accomplished gradually without a catastrophic upheaval, we may envisage in, say, three hundred years time, a world in which poverty and overwork are abolished, and the means to make life not only possible but even comfortable are made available for all in return for about half our present expenditure of effort.

How would people so circumstanced spend their time? What would they do with their surplus energy? How, assuming the persistence of present conceptions, would they utilize the vast tracts of leisure at their disposal? To answer these questions is to conjure up a depressing picture. The earth's surface will be covered with a network of motor roads and aerodromes. Whatever land is left over from cultivation will be used for golf courses and tennis courts, or for the kind of grounds the popular game of the future, whatever it happens to be, demands. The English country will have disappeared, our fields having followed our pictures and cottages, and been transported complete with hedges to America, there to be hired at enormous expense by Fifth Avenue hostesses on



## THE MISUSES OF LEISURE

the look out for new stunts and exhibited in process of being ploughed by mother o' pearl ploughs for the amusement of guests at smart dinner parties. The sea coast will be ringed by a continuous string of Riviera resorts, equipped with "plages" and luxurious hotels at which Jazz bands will discourse negroid music to tired sportsmen and their overfed wives. A deluge of carefully selected news will descend upon the heads of the community aided by every resource of television and telephotony that science may have succeeded in perfecting. Peptonised comments on the news selected, warranted neither to provoke disagreement nor to excite thought, will be emitted from the mouths of loud speakers, while, as regards politics and religion, literature and art, our minds will be filled with whatever opinions are considered to be good for us, as regularly and effectively as the dentists now fill our teeth.

Men and women will move with ever increasing rapidity from place to place on the surface of the earth, finding amusement in all and contentment in none. Pseudo-religions will spring up like mushrooms, and men will rush to embrace esoteric creeds which vainly promise them balm for their sick souls. Women will follow Great White Masters into the desert.

## THE FUTURE OF LEISURE

Finally the sheer boredom of a life made unendurable by wasted energies, servitude to pleasure and a craving for amusement which grows ever more difficult to satisfy, will lead to war, and men will be driven to kill one another in order to kill time. This is the contingency which M. Maurois envisages in his book, "The Next Chapter," in which the world's newspaper proprietors find themselves constrained to invent a hypothetical enemy in the moon, to give a spice to life and keep the nations of earth from each other's throats.

The writing of this book was in part prompted by a desire to reply to M. Maurois, and in the next section we shall endeavour to indicate an alternative conception of leisure by the adoption of which mankind may yet escape the fate that he foresees.

But it is equally part of my purpose to dwell upon the evils that attend the misuse of leisure, and to emphasize the danger of leisure's increase. Before, then, we proceed to our alternative, let us follow our indictment to its logical conclusion and carry M. Maurois' prophecy a stage further with an extract from the work of a Martian historian writing in the year 10,000 P.M.I. (Post Martem Incarnatum). "On our neighbouring planet, the earth, the age of the greater reptiles was followed by that of the vertebrate mammals. Of

## THE MISUSES OF LEISURE

these the homunculi, in spite of their physical deficiencies, which included a constitution so ridiculously inadequate that it was only by covering themselves with the skins of other animals that they were able to keep warm, and a complete helplessness in their young protracted over a period of extraordinary duration, were nevertheless enabled by their possession of a low grade cunning, which pessimistic writers have likened to our own intelligence, to establish a complete domination over the rest of the planet. This they employed for the purpose of preying upon the other inhabitants of the earth, and they would ultimately have succeeded in denuding the whole planet of life, were it not for the internecine feuds upon which their quarrelsome nature led them to embark among themselves. The domination of the homunculi was eventually terminated by their discovery of how to release the forces locked up in the atom, a discovery of which they speedily made use to exterminate themselves altogether. The destruction of this noxious species through their own innate mischievousness, has always been acclaimed by our theologians as affording one of the strongest pieces of evidence for the providential government of the universe."

### III. THE FUTURE OF LEISURE

I wonder if it has ever occurred to the reader to speculate upon the pursuits of our descendants. By the word descendants I do not mean our great great grandchildren of a couple of hundred years hence, but the beings who will be inhabiting this planet in, say, fifty or a hundred thousand years. How, it may be asked, will they spend their time?

The suggestion of a possible answer will be found in the picture of the Ancients in the last play of Shaw's *Back to Methuselah* Pentateuch. For the first two years of life the Ancients love; having exhausted the emotions to be derived from sex at the age of two, they proceed to art, which occupies them until they are four. It is then discarded on the grounds that it presents us with images only of reality, and that nobody will occupy himself with the image who can contemplate the original. Thereafter the Ancients achieve an almost complete emancipation from bodily needs and limitations. They no longer sleep or eat or talk. They have achieved such power over the body that they are enabled to

## THE FUTURE OF LEISURE

change their physical structure at will. Barring accidents they can live indefinitely, but so long as the body continues to exist as an accompaniment of life, their lives are subject to any hazard that may destroy the body. Meantime they are occupied in thinking. The vast tracts of their prodigious lives are indeed devoted entirely to that study of reality, which in its initial stages in logic, mathematics, and science we to-day call thought. All the toys of men's past—images and pictures, love, romance and adventure have one by one been discarded, and nothing remains interesting except thinking. The body is the last toy to be given up, and, when that final emancipation has been achieved, there will be no people but only thought, so that life becomes a whirlpool in pure intelligence, which began as a whirlpool in pure force. The object of evolution, then, as Shaw conceives it, is the attainment by life of a state of continuous and untrammelled thinking, undisturbed by the solicitations of the body, that outworn heritage of man's past.

What I wish chiefly to stress in this conception is the nature of life's ultimate relationship to matter. It will be noticed that in the last resort matter has been passed beyond. It is passed beyond in two senses ; life, that is to say the living

## THE FUTURE OF LEISURE

organisms in whom life expresses itself, no longer knows matter in the sense of thinking about or occupying itself with it, and it is not subservient to it, in the sense of being dependent upon a material body.

The prospect is not one which attracts, and the ultimate destiny of the species is unlikely to be acclaimed with enthusiasm. A life devoid of love, of art, or of amusement, devoted to the contemplation of immutable entities, of the kind envisaged by mathematicians and enjoyed by mystics, is not likely to appeal to the ordinary sensual, twentieth century man. Women in particular will find it lacking in emotional colour. The pursuits described are no doubt godlike—Aristotle, for example, opined that the occupation of the deity consisted in doing geometrical problems, but Aristotle was a little inclined that way himself, and is not likely to be accepted by my readers as an arbiter of the good life. But we have no right to judge the pursuits of the future by the tastes of the present; the amoeba would probably fail to enjoy a modern football match, while the delights of sitting in a bar, a theatre, the House of Commons or in church would probably leave our comparatively recent ancestor, the lemur, cold.

We should not, therefore, allow ourselves

## THE FUTURE OF LEISURE

to be distracted by the repulsiveness of the prospect from a consideration of the possibility of its realization. And what I want in this concluding section to suggest is that there are already to-day certain signs and portents pointing Ancient-wards, and that it is only by giving heed to them and moulding our lives in accordance with the indications which to the discerning eye they present, that we can escape the hell of boredom and restlessness to which our present misuse of leisure is likely to bring us.

Before drawing attention to these signs I wish to make a distinction and draw attention to a fact.

I will take the fact, which is really a series of facts, first. The facts in question relate to the probable duration of life upon this planet. By life I mean human life, or whatever higher type of life the process of evolution may succeed in producing. The period during which there has been life of some kind or other upon the planet is usually reckoned at about twelve hundred million years; the period during which there has been human life, at about one million. Let us represent this period of a million years by a month. Then on this scale the whole of the past history of civilization would be represented by about seven or eight hours; on the same scale—a scale which represents a million years as

## THE FUTURE OF LEISURE

a month—the probable period during which the planet may be expected to remain habitable, and during which, therefore, we may suppose that civilization will continue, would be about 100,000 years. In other words the future of civilization will extend for about twelve hundred thousand million years, or for a thousand times as long as the whole past history of life, and twelve hundred thousand times as long as the whole past history of man. The amount of time at our disposal for the purpose of learning how to employ ourselves properly is, therefore, considerable.

The distinction will involve us in a little philosophy which I regret but cannot avoid. It is a distinction between different types of objects of knowledge. When we perceive the world around us by means of our five senses, the things which we know or have experience of are bits of matter. These bits of matter will be analyzable into humps in space-time, or quanta of energy, or atoms and electrons, or whatever is the most fashionable formula in physics at the moment, but bits of matter they will remain. Now these bits of matter are always different from the perceptions we have of them, since sense experience is a process in which the knowing mind is brought into contact with something other than itself. The



## THE FUTURE OF LEISURE

perception of a table, in short, is different from the table perceived.

*Reader.*—All this is highly controversial. What about Idealism?

*Author.*—Of course it is, but this is not a book on philosophy, and I cannot stop to refute Idealism now. I have not the time or the space. Therefore you must allow me to state what appears to me to be the most reasonable theory of sense perception without defending it. Besides it is nothing like so controversial as what is coming.

Now let us suppose that I cease to experience bits of matter through my senses, and shutting my eyes proceed to think about something. I am thinking, let us say, about Caesar. Now a thought about Caesar is clearly not a thought about a bit of matter, since Caesar as a bit of matter no longer exists, or, if he does, he is by now so diffused through the substance of the planet and our own bodies, that he is no longer isolable as a piece of matter. Yet thinking about Caesar is thinking about something; this is clear if only because a thought of Caesar is different from a thought of Alexander; therefore Caesar must in some sense exist, both in order that he may be thought about and also that he may possess the property of being different from Alexander.

*Reader.*—But surely Caesar is some-

## THE FUTURE OF LEISURE

thing mental, a notion or idea in the head of the person thinking about him ?

*Author.*—Not at all. If this were so, we should each of us be thinking about something different when we thought about Caesar, namely about a different idea in each thinker's head, and history lessons would be impossible. Indeed communication of any kind between people would be impossible, since no two people would or could think of the same thing. But as a matter of fact you do understand what I mean when I talk about Caesar, and you understand me because we are both thinking about the same thing. Besides did we not agree just now that experience is a process in which mind is brought into contact with something other than itself ? If this is true of our experience in perceiving tables and chairs, it is equally true of our experience in thinking of Caesar and Alexander.

Finally, if Caesar were only an idea in our heads, the abolition of all the people thinking about Caesar would mean the abolition of Caesar ; or, to put the point generally, the total elimination of mind from the universe would involve the going out of existence of history, not of our knowledge of history mark you, but of all those events and personages which make up the content of the history we know. But a present event such as the

## THE FUTURE OF LEISURE

abolition of thinking persons cannot affect a past event such as the battle of Waterloo, and, on the face of it, to say that there was no battle of Waterloo fought in 1815, simply because nobody happens to be thinking of it, seems absurd. Therefore the things we think about in history do not exist merely as ideas in our heads.

*Reader.*—What, then, is an historical object, like Caesar?

*Author.*—The answer to this question would require a treatise on philosophy, which cannot be written here. It is sufficient for my present purpose to emphasize the points first, that when we are engaged in the activity of thinking our minds are definitely in contact with something, just as they are in the case of sense experience; secondly, that this something is neither a product of our thinking and therefore mental, nor is it material, yet it indubitably exists. In order, therefore, to avoid controversial issues as far as possible, I propose to call it non-committally an object of thought.

When, therefore we are doing history or mathematics or logic or philosophy or psychology or sociology or economics, we are engaged in the knowledge or awareness not of bits of matter but of objects of thought. And the same is true of the sciences in so far as they consist not merely in the performance of experiments with

## THE FUTURE OF LEISURE

bits of matter in laboratories, but in thinking about and interpreting the results of the experiments and in planning fresh ones. To mix substances in a test tube is to know or be aware of bits of matter; but to arrive at the simplest scientific formula, as for example that water is  $H_2O$ , is to know objects of thought, since what is known is not merely a fact about the particular hydrogen and oxygen with which an experiment has actually been made, but a fact about the properties of *all* hydrogen and oxygen, whenever and wherever they may be, both those samples of the gases which have been experienced and those which have not. To be aware of this fact, it is not necessary that we should be having experience through our senses, and our knowledge of it does not, therefore, consist entirely of knowledge of that which the senses have revealed.

One further distinction and our prefatory remarks are done. Among the objects of which we have knowledge otherwise than through our senses, there are some which we realize to possess value. Value is an unanalyzable characteristic, and, if I am asked what I mean by it, I can only answer that it is that for which we feel a unique kind of emotion. On analysis objects of value seem to reduce themselves to three, namely, truth,

## THE FUTURE OF LEISURE

goodness and beauty. When, however, I say that the emotions these objects arouse in us are unique, I do not mean that they are therefore the same unique emotions, that our feeling for a good action, for example, is the same sort of feeling as our feeling for a beautiful picture. The two feelings are in fact quite different, but each is recognized to be unique, and also, in some way which we find it hard to define, supremely important. Objects of value, like objects of thought, are neither mental nor material, but are real factors in the universe apprehended by mind. Truth, for example, includes not only all the true propositions I know, but also the ideal of complete and absolute truth by reference to which the truth of every particular true proposition is judged. Goodness is not the sum of individual good acts, but that by reference to which we perceive that they are good. Beauty is more than the sum of beautiful pictures and pieces of music ; it is the source and origin of such beauty as they are found to possess. In short, directly we begin to reflect upon the facts of ethical and aesthetic experience, we realize that there is a something, which we are accustomed to call an ideal, beyond the actual, a something which really exists and confers upon the actual that quality in virtue of which it excites our admiration. And the

## THE FUTURE OF LEISURE

more experience we have of what is good and beautiful the more extensively does the ideal reveal itself to the mind. It is for reasons of this kind that we postulate the existence of what I have called ideal objects or objects of value.

Let us take as an illustration of this doctrine when applied in practice the case of aesthetic judgment. When we judge of a particular picture that it is beautiful, we do so because we recognize the presence in it of some element or quality that is not a material quality ; when we affirm that a piece of music is beautiful, we do so in virtue of its possession of the same quality. We are implying, in other words, that beauty is a sort of essence which attaches to, or manifests itself in, certain kinds of material objects, as a result of which they produce in us a particular kind of effect which is at once unique and unanalyzable. This effect, which we call aesthetic emotion, is the result of the mind's recognition of the presence of the non-material essence or quality of beauty in material objects.<sup>1</sup> Similarly moral

<sup>1</sup> I cannot stop to refute the subjectivist account of the nature of aesthetic effect according to which the statement "this picture is beautiful" means no more than that we happen to like it. It should be obvious that there is a radical distinction between the statement "these prunes are sour" and the statement "Shakespeare is a good writer", a difference

## THE FUTURE OF LEISURE

feeling or moral consciousness is the recognition of the presence of the non-material quality of goodness in people's actions and characters.

Our knowledge of objects of thought is continuous and direct; indeed it is limited only by the fatigue our minds experience in thinking. But objects of value such as goodness and beauty, cannot at our present stage of evolution be apprehended by the mind directly, but only when they are manifested<sup>1</sup> in a sensuous medium. Life, in fact, has not yet evolved at a level at which it is capable of a direct vision of value. We see its reflections only in the material medium of which we are made aware by our senses. Hence we apprehend beauty in pictures and music, goodness in actions and dispositions. Even so, moreover, our vision is fleeting and intermittent; we which can be summed up by saying that, while the former statement is subjective and refers to a sensation in our palates, the latter ascribes an actual quality to the writings of Shakespeare, such that those who do not recognize the quality are aesthetically blind. It is impossible to be wrong on the prune question, but we all recognize that people may have bad taste, as a result of which they may be impervious to all that there is in a work of art, in aesthetic matters.

<sup>1</sup> I use the word "manifested" loosely. The question of the precise relationship between objects of value and material objects and actions which are recognized as possessing value again raises controversial issues.

## THE FUTURE OF LEISURE

cannot prolong aesthetic pleasure any more than we can continuously enjoy moral feelings, so that in aesthetic enjoyment we obtain fleeting glimpses rather than a full view of objects of value. Nor should we succeed in obtaining even these fleeting glimpses were it not for the assistance we derive from the artist. How is this assistance given ?

Although our own vision is limited and conditioned by the stage of evolution which mankind as a whole has succeeded in reaching, there are some in whom life's faculty for vision, that is to say for knowledge of the various kinds of entities that the universe contains, is more developed. At every stage of evolution there are always sports, precocious children of the species, who are in advance of their contemporaries, pointing forward to what the species may become, rather than typically representing it as it is. The artist and the mystic are the precocious children of the human race. Endowed with life at a higher level than the rest of us, their vision is at once more subtle and more penetrating. Common phraseology is near the mark when it speaks of the artist as one who is able to *see* more in a given situation than his fellows. The "more" which he sees is the significant form which lies hid in common objects ; he discerns, that is to say, within the



## THE FUTURE OF LEISURE

material medium which overlays and obscures them, those combinations of lines and patterns which derive significance from the fact that they copy or reproduce the arrangements of the world of value. In common language we may say that the artist detects the manifestation of beauty, in what the ordinary man sees only as an object of everyday use. So long as his vision lasts, the artist remains rapt in contemplation, thrilled to ecstasy by the image of the real which has been vouchsafed to him. But the vision does not last. Life is a dynamic, changing force, an ever restless surge, which, though it may ultimately come to rest in the untrammelled contemplation of the world of value, has not yet emerged at a stage at which such contemplation is either possible or desirable. The most that has yet been vouchsafed even to its favoured children is a fleeting and intermittent glimpse. The veil is lifted only to be redrawn. While aesthetic contemplation lasts, we are will-less and selfless, but only for the moment. Scarcely is he assured of the unique character of what his vision reveals before the artist is caught up again into the stream of life, and pulled back into the world of need and want, of struggle and desire, to which his status as an instrument of life's will inevitably condemns him.

## THE FUTURE OF LEISURE

And filled with longing and regret for the vision that was his, but is his no longer, he strives to embody its outlines on canvas or in stone before the memory of it shall have utterly passed away. Thus the work of art is a witness not so much to the artist's vision as to his failure to retain it. It is because he cannot hold his awareness of the real that he makes images and copies in which his remembrance of it is embodied. In these images and copies, the sensuous material, with which significant form is in natural objects overlaid, is stripped away, and the combinations, whose significance the artist has caught, are presented as clearly as the nature of the subject matter allows. For this reason, because the artist has first prepared the way and made it plain, it is easier for those of us who are not gifted with his powers of vision to see beauty in works of art than it is in natural objects. Thus art is the window through which life gets its first intimation of the nature of the world of value ; its function is, to use a metaphor of Plato's, to turn the eye of the soul round to reality, by revealing the element of significant form in virtue of which the things of the material world show forth the patterns of the world of value which lies behind them. Yet it is not beauty itself that the artist contemplates, but only its images in a material

## THE FUTURE OF LEISURE

setting ; it is only the mystic who may contemplate beauty and truth directly, who may in short engage, if only for a time, in the occupation of Shaw's Ancients, and he, for reasons into which we cannot here enter, is not allowed to indulge his vision overmuch. Having made our distinctions we are now in a position to state our theory.

Life appears in a world of matter and is initially characterised by a twofold relationship to matter. It knows or is aware of matter, and it is dependent upon it. By life's knowledge of matter I mean merely the perception which we as living organisms have of our bodies and of the external world through our five senses. The perception of their bodies and of events occurring in their bodies is characteristic of all living organisms however lowly their status. Even plants may be supposed to be aware of their own physical needs. The feeling of physical need, the need of hunger for example, or of the need for reproduction, can be shown to be due to bodily changes taking place within the organism ; it can be analysed, that is to say, into awareness of events in the material structure of which the body of the organism is composed. Thus a feeling of pain, such as, for example, toothache, can be shown to be our awareness of material occurrences in our bodies.

## THE FUTURE OF LEISURE

Animals, as opposed to plants, are aware not only of their own bodily needs, but also of the world of matter external to their bodies ; they are aware, for example, of other animals.<sup>1</sup> But, though the perception of animals extends over a wider range than that of plants, their attention is still directed almost entirely upon bits of matter. I say "almost entirely" because there are traces of rudimentary thinking in animals : it is probable, for example, that they remember, and the analysis of memory can be shown to require the introduction of objects of thought, since it frequently happens that what we think of, when we remember something, no longer exists as a piece of matter. But in animals the knowledge of objects of thought, even if it exists, is precarious and intermittent, and, like the knowledge of value in human beings, must be reckoned a comparatively abnormal occurrence.

Savages think a little more than animals, but not much. When, however, we come to civilized man we find a noticeable change, a change which can best be expressed by saying that the centre of interest and attention has shifted from pieces of matter to objects of thought. In order that we may realize how this change has become possible, let us consider

<sup>1</sup> This, of course, is also true in some degree of some plants : there is no sharp dividing-line.

## THE FUTURE OF LEISURE

the other characteristic of life's twofold relationship to matter, namely, its dependence upon matter. Now it is notorious that one of the great achievements of civilization consists in its mastery over the forces of nature, in other words, in its power over matter. By the construction of appropriate machines we have made not only gravitation our slave, but also electricity and magnetism, atomic attraction, repulsion, polarization, and so forth. We can utilize these forces to transcend our limitations by making for ourselves new limbs outside ourselves to supplement our original bodily inheritance, cranes and elevators to do the work of arms, trains and motors to take the place of legs. We have learned to fly and supply ourselves with wings in the shape of aeroplanes.

In the second place, we attain to an increasing mastery over the matter which constitutes our own bodies. We have changed, and continue to change, the structure of our bodies by the use to which we put them. Within the comparatively brief period studied by anatomy we have learned to dispense with tails, and we are progressively eliminating organs such as the appendix and growths such as the toenails, for which we have no further use. The urge to think has caused us to achieve an unprecedented growth

## THE FUTURE OF LEISURE

in brain structure, and the increasing size of the human head adds to the difficulties and dangers of childbirth. These changes have been wrought unconsciously ; but we also possess power over the body which we exercise consciously. With each generation that passes, we can prevent the body from decaying for longer periods, and, when at last decay sets in, we can hold life in the body and so prevent dissolution for longer periods. The regeneration of aged bodies is already among the possibilities of medical science. We can turn *crétins* into normal human beings by suitable injections, and are within measurable distance of controlling man's emotional life by regulating the secretions of the ductless glands. Apart altogether from the prospects of determining the sex of our children, we should be able by gland manipulation, within the next hundred years, to make ourselves choleric or timid, strongly or weakly sexed, at will. Everything points to the view that our present power over the body will be still further increased in the future.

Thus our power has grown both over matter in general and over the matter of which our bodies are composed in particular. Each increase in power over matter diminishes our need to know it. For example, we do less with our hands than our ancestors, we do not carry weights

## THE FUTURE OF LEISURE

about, defend ourselves from attack, or develop great muscular strength. We have in fact delegated our intercourse with material objects to machines, and our intercourse with machines may be reduced in theory to the necessity for pressing an occasional button. Each fresh advance in applied science and each addition to man's power over nature that it brings, is indeed, rightly interpreted, merely a contrivance for diminishing our need to know and have intercourse with matter. This fact is partially obscured by our childish habit of regarding machines as ends in themselves rather than as means to ends beyond themselves, at some of the instances of which we have already glanced in the preceding section. Until we have outgrown this habit, we shall continue to look to mechanisms for our occupation, and to depend upon them for our pleasure, instead of regarding them merely as energy economisers, whose *raison d'être* consists in their ability to release us from the need to concern ourselves with matter and to set us free to attend to other things. But this mistake, while it may delay, cannot permanently obstruct the general development of life away from matter. To the consequences of the delay we shall refer in a moment. Meanwhile the general tendency of the last two thousand years,

## THE FUTURE OF LEISURE

a tendency which utilises the extra limbs we have made outside ourselves to carry on our business with matter for us, is sufficiently obvious. As a result our knowledge or awareness of matter is continually diminishing. Compared with the savage whose main activities consist in using his hands for hunting and fighting, we make but little use of material physical objects. So true is this that the ordinary clerk or professional man can, broadly speaking, go through the day without using his hands at all, except to dress and feed himself and to write, and the lessening intercourse between the hands and matter could be paralleled from the use of the other limbs. Meanwhile our senses decay as the need for awareness of physical objects grows less ; the savage can hear noises to which we are deaf, and our sense of smell grows duller with each generation.

Now the suggestion that I want to make is that evolution is not a blind, haphazard process, as the materialists suppose, but that it is purposive. Putting it crudely we may say that the purpose of life is so to evolve that life's knowledge of the world of matter may be superseded by a knowledge of the world of value. Initially life is completely dependent upon matter, and matter exclusively occupies its attention. Already it has achieved a certain degree of emancipation as a result of which



## THE FUTURE OF LEISURE

it has partially freed itself from the necessity to concern itself with matter, and the attention thus liberated is increasingly directed upon objects of thought. Thinking, in other words, is beginning to supersede doing. As thinking becomes habitual, there begins to emerge for the first time the capacity for new kinds of experience to which we give the names of religious, ethical, and aesthetic. These experiences may be interpreted in terms of the mind's knowledge or awareness of new types of objects, which we have called objects of value, of which we are now beginning to have our first uncertain intimations. And just as the experience of objects of thought, which with animals is rare and intermittent, has with us become normal, so may thinking in its turn come to be superseded by the direct experience by life, in its ultimate stage of development, of the objects which belong to the world of value. Thus our future progress is one in which, passing beyond thought, we shall reach the level of illumination, at which the mystic glimpses the world of reality. And this level will not be reached as at present merely by a few privileged representatives of life such as artists and mystics, nor will life's vision be, as their's is, intermittent and fleeting, directed not upon reality itself but only upon its copies discerned

## THE FUTURE OF LEISURE

in a sensuous medium, but life as a whole in all expressions and representations of itself will come to rest in direct, continuous and untrammelled contemplation of reality itself.

But what, it may be asked, is the bearing of this disquisition upon the objects of knowledge, and of the fantastic theory of the purpose of evolution in which it issues upon the use of leisure? The connection is not far to seek. What I have tried to suggest is that life has now reached a stage in the evolutionary process at which it is beginning to pass beyond the need to know or concern itself with matter. If there is any substance in this suggestion, we may suppose that matter will ultimately be eliminated by life as an object of attention, just as toys are discarded by children who have outgrown them. Long before life has reached this stage however, matter will begin to be found unsatisfying as an object of interest, and the dissatisfaction with matter will grow. Now, if we examine the various uses to which leisure is put, we shall find that nine-tenths of them are concerned to bring the person enjoying leisure into contact with matter. The most frequent use of leisure is to play games, most of which consist in hitting small round bits of matter with long thin ones; but motoring, dancing, moving rapidly upon the face of the earth and assaulting

## THE FUTURE OF LEISURE

the country are all occupations, whose object is to bring us into direct contact with matter not as a means but as an end.

Mind, I am not suggesting that we should not motor, any more than I am suggesting that we should not go into the country, though both motors and the countryside are made of matter. My point is that motors should be treated not as an end in themselves but merely as a convenience. As a convenience they should take us somewhere, and, when it is to the country they take us, then the country should be regarded not as a material foundation for homes or picnics, or as an object to be sight-seen or to be photographed, but as one of the avenues through which the spirit may gain access to the world of value. Natural beauty is like the beauty of a picture or that of music, a ladder whereby the soul may climb out of the world of matter to a place whence it may catch a fleeting glimpse of the world of value, as a man may climb a hill by the wayside to refresh his eyes with a view of a far country to which he is journeying. It is in this light, as a window which reveals a world beyond, that the great poets have viewed nature, and, though we may not attain to their vision, yet even by us the country is no more rightly viewed merely as a material place than

## THE FUTURE OF LEISURE

a symphony is adequately accounted for as a collection of vibrations in the atmosphere impinging on the eardrums.

If I am right, to seek occupation for leisure in intercourse with matter is bound in the end to prove a sterile and unprofitable undertaking. Of an existence so spent all that Schopenhauer had to say of the fundamentally unsatisfying character of pleasure will be true. Life will consist of periods of needing or wanting, followed by short spells of quiescence attendant upon the satisfaction of need, while any attempt to enjoy the satisfaction without the preceding pain of need will result merely in boredom. When the economic millenium comes, unless we drastically revise our notions of leisure, we shall all be living Schopenhauerian lives, the lives of pleasure-seekers in all ages, with the pendulum of existence swinging between desire and satiety. Life will resolve itself into a succession of pleasures which increasingly fail to please, with the spectre of boredom attending those who fail in the art of extracting some new sensation from intercourse with matter. And, since servitude to the need for amusement is the most intolerable form of slavery to which human beings have yet subjected themselves, the increase of leisure will produce a restlessness and a craving for

## THE FUTURE OF LEISURE

excitement which will render war an ever present possibility.

It is often said that the only way by which men may avoid war is by sublimating the energies that make for conflict and finding in wrestling or boxing, in climbing or fencing, in the football field, or in the gymnasium, an outlet for that spirit of adventure and love of excitement which war satisfies, and that capacity for endurance which war taxes. Such methods may have served in the past, but, if my diagnosis is right, a different and more profound sublimation is required to-day, a sublimation which will divert our energies not from killing men to breaking records, but away from the world of matter altogether. Effort, we said, is the law of life, and deprived of the incentive to effort creatures wither and degenerate. The lapdog and the aristocrat are witnesses to the fate that attends those who have no need to struggle. But different types of effort are appropriate to different levels of life, and it may be that life is passing beyond the level at which effort on the material plane can ever again be permanently satisfying.

Our misuse of leisure arises from two causes. In the first place we, believe that enjoyment can be obtained without effort ; in the second, those who have discovered that this belief is fallacious, think that

## THE FUTURE OF LEISURE

effort on the physical plane is what is chiefly required. Let us take the first point first. The struggle for existence on the physical plane has been largely transcended ; we no longer fight one another with tooth and claw for the available food supply, and, though a crude physical competition with our fellows has been superseded by a struggle in the economic field over wages and prices, this is carefully restricted to business hours. When they are over, we think that we are entitled to relax and to take our ease ; our leisure, we feel, should be free from struggle.

No belief could be further from the truth. The force that animates us will not be bought off in this way. It spurs us on to new kinds of effort, and, when the struggle of our working hours is laid aside, threatens us with boredom, if we seek a passive enjoyment or merely rest. And, so far as the life of the body is concerned, many of us have come to realize this, and having learned by experience that no game is worth playing unless it is played as if the winning of it were the only thing that mattered in the universe, we force ourselves to undergo a severe training as a preliminary to undergoing the arduous and endurances of the running track or the football field. It is the subconscious realization of the same truth that sends men mountain climbing, exploring or big

## THE FUTURE OF LEISURE

game shooting. These men escape the boredom that waits upon the pleasure seeker, and enjoy the happiness which comes to all who struggle. But theirs is not the greatest happiness of which man is now capable, because the struggle takes place on a level below the highest at which life has now manifested itself. And so our second failure is a failure to realize that effort in the world of thought is not only as real and as exciting as effort in the world of matter, but that life has now reached a stage at which such effort alone is permanently satisfying, so that, just as the urge of life once drove men to acquire new qualities of physical skill and to lay up fresh reserves of physical endurance in the struggle against nature, so it now finds its most appropriate expression in the effort to paint a picture or to remodel a social system, to realize life imaginatively in fiction or to grapple with the problems of existence in philosophy. Thinking, which is the knowledge of objects of thought, is now the appropriate activity of normal, educated men, just as the apprehension of objects of value in artistic creation and mystical contemplation is the privilege of the race's most advanced representatives. It is, then, to a knowledge of the past in history or archaeology, to the understanding of the physical universe in science or of ourselves

## THE FUTURE OF LEISURE

in psychology, to the alleviation of some social defect by the study of economics or sociology, to the solution of some problem in mathematics or philosophy, in short, to thinking, to reading, to writing, and to creating, that our leisure, if it is to be a pleasure and not a boredom, will in the future be devoted. To put forth all our energies in the effort to grasp the relation between objects of thought, to maintain our faculties at cutting edge in the endeavour to see further into the world of value, these things will constitute for most of us to-day the best life of which we are capable.

And, though I have made perhaps an undue pother about it, and clothed my notion in a new and fantastic garb, what I have said amounts after all to little more than a restatement of the secular commonplaces of the world's wisdom. In all ages men who have had the opportunity to try every kind of life, combined with the energy and the talents to give the more exacting lives a fair trial, have seemed to reach agreement on this one point, that the only thing which can give permanent satisfaction is the employment of our best faculties at their highest pitch, alternating with the recreation of the mind in music and art and literature and the conversation of our friends. Such at least has been the worldly teaching of



## THE FUTURE OF LEISURE

the sages. If we may add to the recreations, the satisfaction of our instinctive need for country sights and sounds, and the opportunity for occasional solitude, omitted in the past because ours is the first civilization in which they cannot be taken for granted, we can endorse their teaching. To such teaching we must look for the right use of leisure, and by its means alone can we escape the disastrous results of its misuse.

The mischief which Satan finds for idle hands has always been considered appropriate to children ; but this is unfairly to limit the application of the maxim. In the eternal warfare between parents and children we have only heard one side of the case, the parents having written all the books. Children suffer just as much at the hands of idle parents, as parents suffer at the hands of idle children. Nor need the distinction be pressed since, from the secular point of view, we are all children, light-heartedly playing with a civilization of toys. Unfortunately some of our toys are dangerous, and unless we learn how to employ ourselves properly, Satan will suggest to us appropriate uses for them against the other children. This danger is the greater, since we are likely in the near future to embarrass ourselves with longer holidays.

Hence it is important that we should

## THE FUTURE OF LEISURE

grow out of our toys as soon as possible, and turn our attention to real things, remembering that it is only children who identify what is real with what can be seen and felt. To those who would rise above this juvenile condition I would recommend the practice of that early leisure-user, Diogenes, who, restricting his intercourse with matter to the use of a tub, therein exercised his faculties in continuous meditation upon objects of thought.











